(i) Food crops (cereals, millets and pulses).

(ii) Oilseeds.

(iii) Annual commercial/horticultural crops.

Paddy, Cotton, Groundnut, Sunflower, Jowar, Maize, Tur, Bajra, Greengram, Soyabean, Ragi, and Blackgram crops are covered under the Varsha Bima 2005 Scheme of AIC.

(d) Details of number of farmers benefited under NAIS and Varsha Bima during the years 2003-04,2004-05 and first six months of 2005-06 are given as under:

SI. No.	Years	Farmers Benefited	
		NAIS	Varsha Bima
1.	2003-04	3777311	-
2.	2004-05	3097944	984
3.	2005-06	No claims have paid in the 1st six months.	364

Expansion of weather insurance

1808. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the estimated agriculture losses of nearly Rs. 2000 crores in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh and a complete eradication of farm income in the flood affected areas, have brought to light the need for an expansion of weather insurance in India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether at present the insurance firms do not cover excess rainfall but cover only the deficient rainfall;

(d) if so, the measures taken by Government to extend the weather insurance to cover excess rainfall to benefit farmers; and

(e) if so, the detaiis thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Weather based insurance scheme *i.e.* Varsha Bima Yojana of Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd. (AIC) was implemented on pilot basis in four States including Andhra Pradesh during Kharif 2004. In Kharif 2005, the scheme has been implemented in 10 States including Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra covering more than 1.25 lakh farmers. In addition, some private insurance companies like ICICI-Lombard General Insurance Company, IFFCO-TOKYO General Insurance Company are also implementing weather based insurance particularly rain-fall insurance schemes on limited scale.

(c) to (e) Losses due to excess rain-fall are not covered at present under Varsha Bima Yojana. However, Joint Group constituted by the Government of India, to study the improvements required in the existing crop insurance schemes have recommended for evolving a farmer friendly weather based insurance scheme. The Government, at present, is in the process of consulting different stakeholders for the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Group.

World Bank assistance to Himachal Pradesh for apple plantation

t1809. SHRI BASHISTHA NARAIN SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the assistance through World Bank provided by the Central Government to the Government of Himachal Pradesh during the last three years to help economically backward people and SCs to grow apple plantation;

(b) whether it is a fact that weaker sections of Rohadu and Chhargaon Tehsil of Shimla district have not benefited from it; and

(c) if so, whether the Central Government will ask the State Government to look into the matter?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India has not provided any assistance of World Bank to Government of Himachal Pradesh during last 3 years to grow Apple plantations.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.